

## **American Classics/Of Mice and Men**

“The best laid plans of mice and men often go awry.” Robert Burns, Scottish poet

### **Setting:**

### **Structure:**

Steinbeck wrote *Of Mice and Men* (MM) as a play/novelette. That is, the structure of the book is very much like a play even though it appears to look like a short novel. Notice how easily the book breaks down into acts and scenes as in a play:

#### Act I

Scene i. A sandy bank of the Salinas River

Scene ii. The interior of a bunk house

#### Act II

Scene i. The same as Act I, scene ii

Scene ii. The room of the stable buck, a lean-to

#### Act III

Scene i. One end of a great barn

Scene ii. Same as Act I, scene i

### **Analyzing Literary Elements:**

Give three examples of **irony** (either verbal, situational, or dramatic) that you find in the novel. Be sure your example is complete and give the page number in parentheses at the end.

1.

2.

3.

Give three examples of **symbolism** that you find in the novel. Name the idea or thing and what it stands for. Give the page number in parentheses at the end of the example.

1.

2.

3.

### **Parallels and Contrasts:**

Parallels are things that are similar or alike and their similarity provides emphasis. Contrasts, on the other hand, are things that are different, but they also provide emphasis. Give examples of each from the novel. The first one in each case is give as an example. Give the page number in parentheses at the end of the example.

Parallels:

1. George and Lennie's dream and Curley's wife's dream: both are never realized.

2.

3.

4.

Contrasts:

1. George is small and smart; Lennie is big and dumb

2.

3.

4.

**Characters:**

Fill in the table for the following characters.

Character	Physical description, age, personality	What do they do or what is their relationship to others?
Lennie Small		
George Milton		
Candy		
Curley		
Curley's wife		
Slim		
Carlson		
Crooks		

**Vocabulary:**

The following fifteen words include the slang of the time. They are defined for you. Another list of 25 follows. Choose ten of those to define on your own. Use your own paper for these words and attach to the packet.

1. bindle: a bed roll and/or pack of personal belongings.
2. jack: money
3. graybacks: lice
4. tick: mattress
5. buck: a man
6. buckler: those who move or load heavy objects (sacks of grain, for example)
7. skinner: a driver of a draft (team of animals)
8. tart: prostitute
9. mules: shoes or slippers
10. found: free food and lodgings in addition to wages
11. hoosegow: jail
12. hame: part of the collar for a draft animal
13. booby hatch: insane asylum
14. floozy: cheap, immoral woman
15. snooker: a variation of pool played with 15 red balls and 6 balls of assorted colors

derogatory	indignation	dutifully	morosely	pugnacious
wry(ly)	disarming	contorted	mottle(d)	scourge(s)
profound	contemptuous(ly)	belligerent(ly)	brusque(ly)	crestfallen
brindled	earnest(ly)	writhe(d)	imperious(ly)	omninous(ly)
scuttled	scornfully	console(d)	scudded	mollified

**Responding to the novel:**

Choose two of the following prompts to write a full paragraph (one for each) in response (150-200 words). Make reference to the novel in support of your ideas. Write these on your own paper and attach to this packet.

1. Why do we have friends? What makes a friend?
2. How important is it for human beings to have a place where they belong, where there are people who know them and love them?
3. Why do dreams sometimes fail?
4. Define euthanasia. Then defend or condemn the practice. Justify your belief.
5. Who is your favorite character in this book? Give your reasons for choosing him or her.